

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 04413 252056Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 4413

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, CI

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY CHILE RECTORS

1. MORNING PRESS CARRIED GOC ANNOUNCEMENT ACCEPTANCE RESIGNATION RECTOR-DELEGATE OF UNIVERSITY OF CHILE, RETIRED AIR FORCE GENERAL CESAR RUIZ DANYAU, AND NEWS OF HIS REPLACEMENT BY ANOTHER RETIRED AIR FORCE OFFICER, BRIG. GEN. AGUSTIN RODRIGUEZ PULGAR.

2. PRESS NOTES THAT RUIZ, ALONG WITH OTHER RECTORS AND GOC OFFICIALS, HAD PRESENTED HIS RESIGNATION WHEN GENERAL PINOCHET TOOK POSITION OF CHIEF OF THE NATION EARLIER THIS MONTH. PINOCHET ACCEPTED IT MORNING JULY 24.

3. RODRIGUEZ IS DESCRIBED IN PRESS AS HAVING BEEN BORN JUNE 26, 1918 IN ROCALHUE, VILLAGE NEAR CITY OF LOS ANGELES IN SOUTHERN CHILE. ENTERED MILITARY ACADEMY IN 1934 AND TWO YEARS AFTER GRADUATION TRANSFERRED TO AIR FORCE. IN 1943 TRAVELED TO CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS FOR ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINING. HE HAS BEEN TEACHER IN AVIATION SCHOOL AND AIR WAK ACADEMY, DIRECTOR OF SPECIALISTS SCHOOL AND FROM 1971 TO 1973 WAS CHIEF OF AIR FORCE PERSONNEL. IN AUGUST 1973 HE WAS FORCIBLY RETIRED BY PRESIDENT ALLENDE.

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 04413 252056Z

COMMENT: WHILE REPLACEMENT RUIZ AND HIS APPOINTMENT AS

AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN RUMORED FROM TIME TO TIME OVER PAST SIX MONTHS, ANNOUNCEMENT WAS SO SUDDEN THAT PRELIMINARY GOC OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE QUOTES JUNTA PRESS SECRETARY FEDERICO WILLOUGHBY AS "NOT KNOWING THE NAME OF THE SUCCESSOR." RUIZ HAD ESTABLISHED GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MOST OF NON-MARXIST ACADEMICIANS AND MAY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED TOO SOFT-LINING, PARTICULARLY IN TOLERATION FOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. EMBASSY HAS FOUND HIM AFFABLE AND APPROACHABLE. RODRIGUEZ, A HARD-WORKING, COLORLESS CAREER OFFICER, WAS DESCRIBED BY MILITARY COLLEAGUES SEVERAL YEARS AGO AS STRONG NATIONALIST AND AT BEST LUKEWARM TOWARD U.S. NO KNOWN POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS.

2. AS RECTOR UNIV. CHILE WITH ITS BRANCHES THROUGHOUT COUNTRY RODRIGUEZ PRESUMABLY ALSO WILL SUCCEED RUIZ AS HEAD OF COUNCIL OF RECTORS, WHOSE POWERS TO ENFORCE UNIVERSITY COORDINATION HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED RECENTLY, REPORTEDLY AS PART OF EFFORT BY RUIZ AND OTHERS OPPOSED TO EFFORTS BY MINISTER OF EDUCATION REAR ADMIRAL CASTRO TO EXTEND MINISTRY'S CONTROL OVER HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. WHILE RUIZ ALSO LACKED PRIOR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE HE HAD ACQUIRED A GOOD DEAL OF KNOWLEDGE DURING HIS TENURE SINCE OCTOBER 1973 AND UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS, ALREADY SUFFERING FROM BRAIN DRAIN AND CONFUSION OVER HALF-BAKED AND POORLY EXPLAINED "SELF-FINANCING" SCHEME ADVOCATED BY JUNTA, WILL NOT BE ENHANCED BY THIS SUDDEN CHANGE OF COMMAND.

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